

Supreme Court Upholds Obamacare:

The most anticipated political event of the summer culminated in profound disappointment for a majority of Americans who disagree with President Obama's controversial health care law. Last Thursday, the Supreme Court surprised many with an unusual defense of Obamacare's most egregious provision – the mandate that all Americans must buy health insurance or face a fine.

Going into the high court's deliberations it was reported that a number of the justices questioned whether the so-called cornerstone of Obamacare – the individual mandate – was, in fact, a tax. The Obama administration's own lawyer argued the mandate was not a tax, just as the president and his surrogates have done since 2009.

As Chief Justice Roberts wrote in his opinion, however, the court made no judgment on the wisdom of the law, only its constitutionality. The court declared the mandate a tax and constitutional. This ruling does not change the fact that Obamacare is bad policy -- it taxes too much, spends too much, and intrudes too much between patients and their doctors. The Supreme Court may have the final say as regards the legality of Obamacare, however Congress has the constitutional authority to repeal it.

Shortly after Chief Justice Roberts released the court's decision, House Speaker John Boehner announced that a vote to repeal the health care law will be held the week of July 9. Since January 2011, the House has voted no less than 30 times to either repeal Obamacare outright, to repeal parts of the law or to cut off funding for specific provisions in the law.

I not only support House efforts to fully repeal the president's health care law, but I favor the enactment of market-based reforms to help lower health care costs while extending coverage to those with preexisting conditions. Health care reform can be accomplished without depriving people of their choice of doctors or forcing them to give up their existing coverage as Obamacare would do.

The Supreme Court's decision marked both a sad day for individual freedom and a victory for those who support bigger government and higher taxes. But Congress and ultimately the

American people will have the final say on the fate of Obamacare.

RESTORE Act Passes:

Two years and three months after the tragic 2010 Deepwater Horizon explosion, Congress has finally authorized the application of Clean Water Act fines for the Gulf Coast restoration effort.

Last Friday, the House passed the long-awaited RESTORE Act as part of the new federal transportation authorization bill. I was pleased to vote for its passage just as I have championed the legislation since it was introduced in the House in October 2011.

Under the RESTORE Act, 80 percent of fines assessed against BP and other parties responsible for the 2010 Gulf oil spill would be steered to the states that suffered damage, including coastal Alabama. The monies – which could range from hundreds of millions to several billion dollars – would be spent on economic and environmental restoration programs along the coast of the five Gulf states.

During the final negotiations over the transportation bill, which occurred in June, I was pleased to work with the House leadership to remove unnecessary governmental red tape from the RESTORE Act, which had been added by Senate lawmakers. In the end, the final version of RESTORE as passed by the House last week provides greater flexibility to the Gulf states to oversee and spend these fine monies for local benefit.

While the RESTORE Act has been passed by Congress, funds will not be available until after the federal government and BP, along with other parties involved in the spill, reach an agreement in court.

US Attorney General in Contempt:

Last Thursday, I voted with a majority of the House to hold U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder in

contempt of Congress for his failure to fully comply with a House committee's requests for documents relating to the Justice Department's 'Operation Fast and Furious.'

The Obama administration would rather delay and obfuscate than comply with repeated legitimate Congressional requests for all information relating to its mishandling of a federal law enforcement operation, which put thousands of guns in the hands of Mexican drug cartels and led to the 2010 death of U.S. Border Patrol agent Brian Terry.

Americans expect and demand our elected officials and their appointees conduct themselves in accordance with the law. Unfortunately, this administration has chosen to play fast and loose in this regard, and failed to provide thousands of pages of documents lawfully subpoenaed by Congress in the course of its ongoing investigation.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

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